

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 03810 230911Z

12-R
ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /019 W
----- 033559
R 221411Z AUG 74
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0488
INFO AMCONSUL CAPETOWN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, ETRD, SA, US
SUBJECT: EXPORT LICENSING FOR L-100 AIRCRAFT

REFERENCE: PRETORIA 3567

1. RAND DAILY MAIL AUGUST 22 FRONT PAGED LANDING GEAR PROBLEMS WITH SAFAIR'S L-100 WHILE IT WAS ON ROUTINE TRAINING FLIGHT AT JAN SMUTS. AIRPORT EMERGENCY VEHICLES WERE ON HAND BUT LANDING GEAR LOWERED BY HAND CRANT AND PLANE LANDED WITHOUT INCIDENT. RDM STATED SAFAIR CREW AND ITS PRETORIA SPOKESMAN REFUSED TO GIVE ANY INFORMATION; AND THEN QUOTED MARSH, MANAGING DIRECTOR SAFAIR'S PARENT COMPANY SAFMARINE AS STATING THAT CORRESPONDENT WHOULD QUOTE LEAVE THE PLANE ALONE BECAUSE ITS SOMETHING IN STRATEGIC SECTOR. END QUOTE.

2. LOMBARD OF SAFAIR CALLED US SHORTLY AFTER OPENING OF BUSINESS TO REAFFIRM IT WAS ROUTINE TRAINING FLIGHT AND TO DENY VIGOROUSLY THAT MARSH HAD MADE ANY SUCH STATEMENT, STAING FURTHER RDM CORRESPONDENT HAD BADGERED MARSH AND THEN MADE UP QUOTATION WITHOUT ANY BASIS. LOMBARD SAID MARSH HAD ALREADY BEEN UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE ARISING FROM STRANDING AND POSSIBLE LOSS SAFMARINE'S FREIGHTER ORANJELAND OF EAST LONDON. HE FURTHER URGED US TO SPEAK TO MARSH IN CAPE TOWN DIRECTLY. WE HAVE DONE SO AND OBTAINED DETAILED DENIAL FROM HIM ALSO. MARSH STRESSED HE HAD ONLY SAID TO CORRESPONDENT ROUTINE FLIGHT INVOLVED CREW AND PLANE WERE SAFE AND HE HAD NOTHING
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FURTHER TO ADD. MARSH THEN REEMPHASIZED TO US SAFMARINE'S

DEEP INTEREST IN EXPANDING ITS AIR CARGO SERVICE AND SAID HIS UNWILLINGNESS TO COMMENT FURTHER TO RDM CORRESPONDENT WAS BASED ON DESIRE NOT TO CAST DOUBTS AMONG SHIPPERS ABOUT RELIABILITY OF AIR CARGO SERVICE.

3. FYI: OUR PRESS OFFICER IN JOHANNESBURG HAD EARLIER REPORTED TO US HE WAS SIMILARLY BADGERED BY RDM CORRESPONDENT FOR BACK-GROUND ON AMBASSADOR DAVIES FOLLOWING HIS ASSASSINATION IN NICOSIA. END FYI.

4. COMMENT: WE REPORT THIS TEAPOT TEMPEST ONLY BECAUSE LOCKHEED'S EXPORT LICENSE APPLICATION FOR AIRCRAFT TO SAFAIR NOW UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION. EMBOFFS HAVE VISITEEIJAN SMUTS AIRPORT SEVERAL TIMES THIS WEEK AND HAVE SEEN SAFAIR PLANES STATIONED THERE. OUR TOUR OF SA AIRWAYS MAINTENANCE SHOPS AUG 19 RECONFIRMED SAFAIR TRANSFER THIS WORK TO SAA. WE ALSO NOTE SAA HAS ANNOUNCED BEGINNEING OCT 1 ADDITIONAL AIR FREIGHT SERVICES OUT OF DURBAN USING SAFAIR'S AIRCRAFT. THUS EMBASSY HAS NO REASON TO ALTER ITS RECOMMENDATIONS THAT EXPORT LICENSE BE ISSUED.
HURD

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